

NEWS RELEASE

LAWSUIT FILED, SEEKS INJUNCTION TO LIMIT CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT BOARD'S ACCESS TO POLICE PERSONNEL RECORDS

Two St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department officers have filed a lawsuit against the City of St. Louis in St. Louis Circuit Court, seeking an injunction to limit the Civilian Oversight Board's access to records from the Internal Affairs Division. The claims stem from a state statute that became law as a result of the "Local Control" initiative approved by voters in 2012 returning control of the Police Department from the State to the City. The statute states in part: "The civil service commission's rules and regulations shall provide that records prepared for disciplinary purposes shall be confidential, closed records available solely to the civil service commission and those who possess authority to conduct investigations regarding disciplinary matters pursuant to the civil service commission's rules and regulations." The City passed an ordinance in June of 2015 establishing a Civilian Oversight Board to accept certain citizen complaints against police officers. The ordinance authorizes Internal Affairs to investigate those complaints and then to turn over its investigation to the Civilian Oversight Board when completed. However, the lawsuit claims that the ordinance conflicts with the state statute and in the case of a conflict between a state statute and a city ordinance, the state statute governs.